

## **UNDERSTANDING THE CITY'S NEW SIGN REGULATIONS**

The City of Bloomington, as a result of a recent Supreme Court ruling in the case of *Reed v. Town of Gilbert*, significantly updated its sign regulations. These new sign regulations went into effect on June 7, 2016. It is the hope of the City's Administration that this document will help Bloomington's citizens and business owners understand these new regulations.

1. The only "sign type" which now exists is a "public sign". A "public sign" is one that is erected by or on the order of a public officer in the performance of public duties.
2. There are only two instances in which a sign may be located in the City's right-of-way:
  - a. If the sign is a "public sign"; or
  - b. Sandwich board signs in the Commercial Downtown and Commercial Limited zoning districts.
3. Each property owner in a Residential zoning district is permitted to display the following temporary signs without having to first obtain a permit from the City:
  - a. Signs that do not exceed 1.5 square feet;
  - b. Two temporary signs, neither of which can exceed 5 square feet per side; and
  - c. One temporary sign which cannot exceed 8 square feet per side.
4. Each property owner in a Commercial zoning district is permitted to display the following temporary signs without having to first obtain a permit from the City:
  - a. Signs that do not exceed 1.5 square feet;
  - b. Two temporary signs, neither of which can exceed 5 square feet per side;
  - c. One temporary sign which cannot exceed 8 square feet per side;
  - d. Vacant properties, or those under construction, shall get one temporary sign which shall not exceed 32 square feet per side; and
  - e. Vacant tenant spaces, or tenant space that is under construction, gets one temporary wall sign which shall not exceed 32 square feet.
5. The City will not regulate the content of any sign which is displayed; the only regulations apply to location, size, and materials.
6. Freestanding signs are required to meet a setback standard of 2 feet from property line or outside the clear zone adjacent to the street unless approved by the City's Transportation & Traffic Engineer.
7. In Nonresidential zoning districts, the square footage calculations of the building to determine the overall signage allotment cannot include residential areas.
8. In the Commercial Limited zoning district, wall signs on the back or rear of structures are only prohibited if the wall with the signage faces a residential use.
9. A legal non-conforming multifamily residential use in a Single-Family zoning district with at least 3 dwelling units shall be permitted wall signage not to exceed 10 square feet.
10. Vehicles, vans, trailers or trucks cannot be parked continuously in one location and used to display signs. This does not prohibit vehicle owners from having vehicles or trailers with signs provided the vehicles or trailers are in use on a regular basis and are not continuously parked in one parking lot or one parking space and are not being used to serve in the same manner as an additional freestanding sign or temporary sign.

11. The new regulations state explicitly that nothing in the new standards shall in any way be interpreted to infringe upon those rights guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or Article 1, Section 9 of the Indiana Constitution.